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Hedar 1	Nov. 10	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "työff" for bread; "nug" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Tewsqwam"- clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Hien" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
to	to						
Hedar 30	Dec. 9						
Tahsas 1	Dec. 10	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "tyeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Qulubi near Dire Dawa. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledit", or "Ganna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Ganna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).	19th: Emp. Haile Selessi travels to Qulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.	
to	to						
Tahsas 30	Jan. 8						
Ter 1	Jan. 9	Height of dry summer ("balg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shenbera), plant (gomen) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Temqit"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gezrat"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Astärye Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("guga") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary among Falashas as harvest fest. 12th Monday	On Epiphany, Jan. 19th Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrär") Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in traditional costume.
Ter 30	Feb. 7						

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Yäkatit I to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 6 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("abed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day Fast of Niniwah ("Tsomä Nänïwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit I to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" -(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("hamamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent,"saqlät". Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fassika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tensaë") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("mamlas bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahebbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahebbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 [428] According to traditional law, the mäheböär inherits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal), in preferance to any relatives he might have by marriage (afrinal). The mahebbar
[426 476] acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 561 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mäheböär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

883 The random play activity of younger girls gives play to more structured activities. Girls still work and play in groups but seek to meet groups of young men somewhat older than themselves. Flirting becomes patterned and self-conscious, and behavior in the presence of elders more subdued. Aggressive playfulness, disregarded often before puberty, is severely criticized henceforth.

883 584 Saturday afternoons are preferred times for the gathering of "qonje" girls, for they then go greater distances into the bush to fetch firewood for Sunday. Usually the girls, age 13 to 16, sing loudly so as to attract the group of young men, age 15 to 20, who thereupon follow them at a certain distance. From time to time, the girls, leading the boys on, stop, and dance around like playful little girls, alternately holding each other by the hand, or spinning like a top. This is a signal to the boys to approach, as if by accident, and couples begin to break off from the group to go for a "ahershsher", a promenade, while still gathering deadwood. Since the boys are from nearby hamlets, the youngsters and their parents know each other.

584 796 In the annual cycle of events, three occasions are utilized as landmarks of opportunity in serious flirting, informal courtship, leading to the rapidly ensuing first marriage of the adolescent girl.

The first occurs on "Mikaēl", St. Michael's day, on the 12th day of the month of Hedar, which is celebrated as a kind of Thanksgiving day, for it falls just after the major harvest is completed, in late November. For all ages it is a day of picnics, out in the open, under a bright sunny sky in the first part of the dry season, before the green grass is entirely scorched yellow. Togas have been

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796 freshly washed. The day begins with chanting in the church at dawn, parading of the local "tabot" of Mikael, accompanied by the "ellel" joyshout of the women. Large shelters ("dass") are set up in the open, about noontime, and feasting and beer drinking continues until the late evening.

This day is awaited and prepared for by the adolescent girls who have just concluded their task of watching the harvest from elevated platforms guarding the maturing crop. On this day they use the platforms as shelters, under which they invite their boy friends. The girls bring live chickens, the boys kill them, pronouncing the religious formula over the chickens. The girls then cook them in earthenware pots with appropriate spices and pepper, thus advertising their abilities in cooking and housewifely arts. The girls wear a fresh hairdo, often pomaded (sometimes for the first time) with "ades" - boiled and perfumed butter; their palms reddened with "ensosela" like a grown woman, and lemons and "ades" odorific branches in the folds of their freshly washed heavy cotton frocks. Prepared in this fashion, they begin to attract the boys even while the elders are still in church during morning services. A group of girls will gather within sight of the churchyard, shouting "ellel" at the proper times, dancing their girlish rounds. As soon as they can, the young men thereupon detach themselves from the churchyard or outer enclosure, surround the girls, and feel out their individual popularity by teasing and tickling their chosen girls with olive branches. If a girl agrees to consider a boy, she gives him a lemon or an "ades" branch, which invites him to a "shershsher" at her platform-shelter.

The second annual occasion presents itself on the biggest out-

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584 door event of the year, the church parades on Epiphany ("Temqat"),
796 in connection with the "guks" tournament of the young men. Dressed up in holiday fashion, the "qonjo" girls eagerly follow the fortunes of their preferred boy friends. When no elders are within hearing, some girls direct teasing shouts of encouragement at the young men, even occasionally "ellel" (reserved for church ritual earlier that day). This day is the climax of the informal courtship - serious flirting season, in mid-January.

The third and final occasion occurs on Easter, "Fassika", at the very end of the dry season, just before social activities move indoors. For this holy day, the girls have once more washed their [302] garments despite the shortage of water, reddened their palms, prepared the hairdo. Everyone is in a happy mood, for the long lenten season is over, and meat is consumed in greater quantities than at any other time. There is an element of urgency in social relations, for this is the second and final marriage season, and soon all social life and kin visiting comes to an end for four long, dreary, rainy, chilly months.

It is on the basis of such informal courtship, climaxed on these three annual occasions but continuing in-between, that a young man requests his father to initiate negotiations for marriage by sending an intermediary to the girl's family. If the match seems suitable to the elders, negotiations begin.

4. Adulthood and Marriage: Dominance of the Kin.

582 A girl's first marriage nearly always takes place before she is fully adult, physically as well as in maturity of character; while the bridegroom, though also young, is physically adult and in

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583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through in-[584] direct means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

178 581 871 husbands "who are you to give me orders - I can read as well as you". Therefore such girls are avoided as brides.

But fully educated young men, in Addis Ababa, especially those who have returned from abroad with graduate degrees, complain that there are not enough educated girls for them to marry. There is now a girl's high school in Addis Ababa, but the supply of educated girls is still far below the demand by educated men who do not wish their wives to sit shy and wordless in modern-urban, international social gatherings.

Another modern difficulty arises in cases where the modern-educated young man is the son of an illiterate peasant, or a "rustic" one, and is ashamed to ask his father and similar kinfolk to negotiate the marriage. For even in the city the traditional "semanya" is the basic and most common form of marriage.

584 a) "Semanya" Marriage Negotiations.

Sometimes the young man decides on a girl and asks his father to begin negotiations. Or the parents, feeling that the time has come, begin to send out feelers. In either case, it is the young man's father who initiates formal negotiations with the father and kinfolk of the bride; though not, at first, directly.

The father of the young man may gather his "enjära"-friends, "who dine at each other's table", or kinsmen, or both, and appoint a "näggär abbat" (lit. father of the affair) as intermediary.

Before matters go further, the kin group tries to find out and examine three factors of the prospective match:
1) Health of the family, such as absence of leprosy, venereal disease and other diseases belived to be inherited; 2) Land property -

● 58# preferably "rest" freehold, size of kin group and their relations and reputation, and cattle that might be asked for to match the contributions of the groom's kin; 3) "attentan" (lit. of good bones) - the question whether the kin are of "good stock", and not in part descended from non-Amhara, especially not from slave stock such as Shanqalla or Barya.

Once this is ascertained to satisfaction, the "naggar abbat" embarks on a series of visits to the house of the bride's father, speaking with great politeness, some flattery, putting him in a good mood, speaking in general terms, making philosophic observations, quoting appropriate proverbs in the conversation.

After this visit has been repeated, without any specific request, the host begins to realize that a very serious matter is at hand. He usually guesses what it is, but waits until the visiter, who is usually accompanied by one or two kinsmen or close friends, says: "We came to ask a serious matter; if you permit us, we shall speak of it". Permission granted, the "naggar abbat" continues: "We came to seek your kinship, your daughter and our son, so-and-so". Since it is impolite to refuse outright, and, on the other hand, not "proper" to give one's child away too readily, the host replies: "Let me consult with my kinsmen". Later, he can refuse or procrastinate by saying: "She is yet too young". When they come again the next year, he can say: "Someone else has preceded you, and I have accepted the initial gift". The latter is a small token of little value, serving mainly to indicate symbolically that the girl is spoken for.

If the kinsmen on both sides agree to the match, the "naggar abbat" and companions, on succeeding visits, begin negotiations

584 about the economic arrangements to which both sides contribute equally, for "honor"; for setting up the couple on a sound economic basis; and to assure property to the bride in case of divorce or widowhood. "Semanya" marriage among Amhara usually begins on an economic basis of half-and-half ("bal ekkul") contributions from both kin groups. The kinsmen of the bride would be ashamed to accept more of dowry (gacha) for her than they are able to contribute, lest she be treated disrespectfully by the groom's kinfolk later on who might say: "She was bought like a "damoz", whenever there is a wuarrel. For there is no lobola custom in the one-sided African way. Conversely, a man who marries for cows is mocked:

[539]

"Seeing her cattle, he married a bad one;
when the cattle died,
his trouble was double".

583 Cows are usually the major item of discussion of property changing hands at marriage. Negotiations finally fix the number of cows each will contribute ("kätetesh bakäbtä") (lit. "your property is mine"), usually payable gradually as down payment and in installments, as a further guarantee that the marriage is working out and that there are no complaints (e.g. that the bride actually proved to be a virgin as promised).

Even a poor peasant will try to beg and borrow among his kin, lest he be shamed, so that he can match the dowry of the in-laws with 3 to 5 cows. A rich farmer may give as many as 30 cows to his child, thus requiring the in-laws to match this. A stubborn father can use this means to discourage a match that his youngster has set his heart on; knowing full well that the in-laws, if not rich

583 enough to match him, will be ashamed and cancel the match at this point to save face, while no one can really blame the "generous" father. As a result, most weddings take place on the same economic level.

A really kind father can, however, reduce the number of cows he officially promises, to enable the poorer in-laws to match it. A desparate youngster running up against a stubborn father sometimes appeals to the kinfolk of his or her mother for cows, but this is usually more difficult to obtain, for cows contributed by the patrilineal-patrilocal kin remain in the same hamlet while matrilineally contributed cows are taken out of the hamlet.

Other gifts set down in the dowry, before witnesses or in writing, include new shammas (togas), new jodphurs("surri"), perhaps some donkeys, and a mule. In the case of noblemen, gifts include embroidered shirts, silver crosses for the bride's necklace, gold and silver rings, silver hairpins, a "burnos" (hooded, black woolen coat), a kaba (mantle of woolen or imported chintz cloth), an imported, foldable umbrella. In the past, gifts to the groom included a fine rhinoceros shield with gold-plated ornaments, spears, a rifle, oxen, a good horse, slaves (before abolition), mules, embroidered garments, embroidered saddle, etc. Since then, some of these tradional gifts have been replaced by city and imported items, bought in the Armenian and Greek shops of Addis Ababa, but provincial Amhara are resisting some of these intrusions, (pushed by traders), saying that it should not appear that the bride is bought.

584 While kinship prestige and economic arrangements are considered of primary importance in the "semanya" marriage, once these nego-

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584 tiations are concluded, preparations are made to ensure the spiritual and emotional well-being of the couple. A bridegroom is warned to study the character of his prospective mother-in-law, for it is believed that her daughter will take after her:

"Observe her mother,
before you let the daughter enter (the house)."

584 608 But the importance of the sworn best men, the "mizə̄", in protecting the bride after the marriage, is considered even more important, due to the patrilocal residence. They are called the protectors of her "teeth and arms", ready to rush to her aid even against the husband when she shouts for help. On the other hand, to balance the situation, they are chosen from among the groom's closest relatives, e.g. first cousins (patrilineal), so that they won't be likely to seduce the girl. The two "mize" have to take the vow of excommunication before the "mänfas qubaē" (lit. soul counsel) priest, in front of the parents of the girl and the groom, that they will regard her as a sister, that they will treat her as their own sisters, that they will come night or day when she calls. This formal, literal bond of artificial kinship is strong, and the bride affectionately addresses the "mize" as "gashey" (lit. my shield, i.e. by protector) much as she would an uncle or other grown kinsman. The proverb says:

539 "For confession - go to the priest,
for (selfless) love - go to the mize".

These "mize" become protectors not only of the bride, but, in consequence, of the marriage of the couple. For, if the groom needs a "wäs", a personal guarantor-bondsman for employment or if in legal trouble, the mize can hardly refuse this service as they are now doubly bound. The mize pattern thus increases security and stability

584 608 for all concerned, and is reinforced by the public social sanction given the "swearing - in".

b) "Semanya" Wedding Procedure

585 The wedding consists largely of a formal recapitulation of all the negotiations in public, by the two kingroups involved, sometimes at considerable length, confirmed in a monosyllabic expression from bride and groom. The other major activities are feasting in both hamlets involved, a re-enactment of bride capture at nightfall, and the signs of virginity signifying that the "fortress is just taken".

The preferred day for weddings is Sunday, so that the deflowering, taking place after nightfall which is considered part of Monday, will not take place on the Lord's day. (footnote 82). For the same reason, weddings do not take place on Saturday; nor in lent, a period of mourning; nor on Wednesday or Friday fast days.

Preparations for feasting and gathering are made at both hamlets involved. At both places a "dass" shelter is erected on a square staked out with tall saplings, covered with leafy branches against the sun, with fragrant grasses on the ground. Relatives are invited, but strangers are kept away for fear of the evil eye.

The wedding guests among peasants begin to arrive about noon, Sunday, and are received, at the hamlet of the groom, under the men's "dass". The women occupy a neighboring "dass", busily cooking the meat sauce "wot". The groom remains inside a hut and does not appear until shortly before he has to leave for the hamlet of the

Footnote 82: Sunday is also wedding day of Christians of Lebanon. See - Feghali, Michel: La Famille Catholique au Liban. RETP, 6, pp. 291-308, Paris, 1925.

576 is to excuse oneself as indisposed due to "having drunk kosso", the bitter medicine against tapeworm, which medicine indeed incapacitates the patient for several days, and which is taken frequently and even regularly. He may send a written note of apology:

> " Yaderas kakebur (May this reach the Honorable....):
>
> " I have received your esteemed invitation to dinner. Thank you very much for having (thus) honored me. Having travelled, I have drunk medicine and am unable to come. I beg you not to be annoyed with me for remaining away under those circumstances (lit. in such a difficulty)". (footnote 94)

Gestures in greeting must indicate warmth, to be polite. In shaking hands, one does not withdraw one's hand soon, but keeps holding on loosely for several minutes, while talking. Men do this, also women to women, but a man will not hold a woman's hand in greeting unless she is close blood-kin, such as sister or daughter. Men (or women to women) who have not seen each other a long time, fall on each other's necks and kiss each other on both cheeks. The principle of indicating warmth in greeting overcomes the principle of the separation of the sexes in public, so that, especially in the rural areas and the commoner class where expressive behavior in public is more tolerated than in the upper class of nobility, men may cheek-kiss women in greeting, though not in flirting which must be private.

● 584 In spite of many other changes, it is still considered highly improper for a young man and young girl to hold hands when walking on a "shershar" (promenading). Not even the foreign-educated Amhara dare do this, not even in the modern center of Addis Ababa.

Footnote 94 - Eadie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, p. 276.

834 occasionally affects non-prostitutes also. Arab traders, particularly, like to joke with Coptic Amhara women when the latter come to their stores; such as teasingly to refuse to hand over goods after purchase has been made, or, if the customer finds the price on a desired item too high, suggesting that payment might be made "another way". These fixed stores, located near the daily or Saturday markets, feature luxuries rather than what are considered necessities; e.g. sandals, tea, sugar, raisins, necklaces, imported chocolate, etc. A woman deserted by her husband, or divorced, might succumb. On the other hand, Muslim women are much more segregated from menfolk, so that there is little opportunity for an Amhara male to break the rule with a Muslim female.

836 Virginity ("dengel") is expected of girls at first marriage, which occurs about the age of 14 or 15. If she is found by the husband not to be a virgin, and he feels sure of it and insists on his rights, he can divorce her, or go to court against her kinfolk claiming damages as high as Eth$200 - 300. This is rare, however, for at that age most girls are too young to have had much opportunity for complete sexual

● 584 intercourse. The courtship, apart from the above-described occasions during watch in the fields and on festives - when they are very formal -, consists of what adults condescendingly and smilingly refer to as "Kidarrat", love-whisperings, considered adolescent, during which the boy and girl alternate between childish whisperings and playful hitting at each other. The term is not used for love-making of adults or married couples.

587 Very different is the courtship of the girl after her first divorce, which frequently occurs when her personality matures, often while she is still in her twenties. She prefers an experienced lover.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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273 The first part of the process is to grind the tocusso, after which they take a fourth part of it, and knead it with water and leaven, as if to make bread. This they put in a jar to ferment for two days, at the end of which they make a good many thin large cakes, and dry them on the fire till they become as hard as a stone, then break them down into crumbs, and put them in a large vessel full of water, capable of holding six times the volume of the grain; or for one jar of grain, the vessel holds five of water, and one for the quantity of grain. At the same time that they put in the bruised bread, as above-mentioned, into that quantity of water, the other things should be got ready to go in also. The grain ought to be fermented for two days, then dried in the sun, and afterwards ground into meal. The Ghesh leaves are ground likewise. The remainder of the meal, or those three-fourths that were not used to make the bread, must be put into a hollow oven, over a fire, with a small quantity of water, and constantly stirred with a stick, until it become a paste; and when the water is dried up, more is put in, constantly stirring the mass until it become black like a coal. The whole so prepared, the crumbs, the mass, and the leaves, are put together into the large jar, and let alone for a day, after which it is poured off, and preserved in jars well stopped. At the end of seven or eight days this liquor begins to be too strong, and is best when fresh, two or three days old.

●584 [581] *Marriage.* Marriage is not considered in Abyssinia as a sacrament, yet the church ordains some rules to be observed, in order that the man and the woman may be faithful towards one another. The ordinary method of marriage among people of condition, and among those who most fear God, is the following: The man, when he resolves to marry a girl, sends some person to her father to ask his daughter in marriage. It seldom happens that she is refused; and when she is granted, the future husband is called into the girl's house, and an oath is taken reciprocally by the parties, that they will maintain due fidelity to one another. Then the father of the bride presents to the bridegroom the fortune that he will give: it consists of a particular sum of gold, some oxen, sheep, or horses, &c. according to the circumstances of the people. Then the bridegroom is obliged to find surety

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5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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for the said goods; which is some one of his friends that presents himself, and becomes answerable for him in case he should wish to dismiss his wife, and be not able, through dissipation, or otherwise, to restore all that he has gotten. 584

Further, at the time when they display the fortune of the bride, the husband is obliged to promise a certain sum of money, or an equivalent in effects, to his wife, in case he should chuse to abandon her, or separate himself from her. This must also be confirmed by an oath of the future husband, and of his surety. A certain time, of twenty or thirty days, is determined also by a reciprocal oath, that on the last of these they will go together to church, and receive the sacrament. When all these matters are concluded, the future spouse appoints the marriage-day, and then returns home. When that day arrives, the intended husband goes again to his bride's house, where she appears, and shews him her moveables (mobiglia), or clothes; and he must promise and swear a-new the fore-mentioned articles; and that he will use his wife well; never leave her without meat, or cloathing; keep her in a good house, &c. all which his surety must confirm. When this is over, the bridegroom takes his lady on his shoulders, and carries her off to his house. If it be at a distance, he does the same thing, but only goes entirely round about the bride's house; then sets her down, and returns her into it. After this ceremony, a solemn banquet takes place, consisting of raw beef and bread, and honey-wine, or hydromel, or another beveridge from grain, called bouza, a sort of beer very sour and disgusting. The feast being ended, the parties mount each a mule, and ride to the bridegroom's house, where is concluded all the ceremony necessary to marriage before they live together. When they have lived together during the appointed term of twenty or thirty days, they must both appear at church, and declare before the priest that they are husband and wife, and that they are come to receive the sacrament. The priest, without more ado, celebrates mass; they communicate, and return home. 585

After some time, although both have sworn to live all their life faithful to one another, they take the liberty to separate; if it is the husband who wishes to get off, he, or his surety, must pay the wife that which she brought, and 586

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 the long rains. Children go singing from house to house in small bands, or take bunches of wild flowers to relatives, in hopes of getting a bit of *dābo*. In most homes an animal is slaughtered—in some areas superstition decrees that it be a white-headed lamb or a red chicken—and there is much eating and drinking, the basic activity of every holiday.

A little more than two weeks later the much more important festival of Masqal is observed, celebrating the discovery of the true Cross by Empress Helena. By this time the heavy rains have subsided, and the air is filled with [132] something of the spirit of spring. (Although Ethiopia lies north of the equator the summer rainy season is known as "winter" because of its coldness.) The landscape is colored by acres of yellow wildflowers, which are cut and fastened to the poles each family brings to a central clearing where a huge bonfire is built. In late afternoon, after the tepee of poles has been constructed, the priests begin the ceremony by intoning appropriate chants. Then [554] each status group circles the poles three times, in honor of the Trinity—first the local lord, then the clergy, the lesser nobility, the peasant men, women, and finally the children. In the evening the festival takes a more secular turn. The bonfire is lit, and the young braves dance around it shouting their war chants. As the fire blazes on, these fellows seize burning brands and playfully hurl them at one another.

In November the monthly St. Michael's Day is honored with special cele- [778] brations. The peasants travel distances to attend the ceremonies at any church consecrated to "Mikā'ēl." Holy water and hot springs sanctified by Mikā'ēl's name are drunk and bathed in by those with many kinds of disease. The rituals involve carrying the Mikā'ēl *tābot* ("holy ark") out of the church and elaborate chanting and dancing by the clergy. After the *tābot* has been returned, in a procession in which the laymen follow shouldering their rifles (undoubtedly spears in older times), folk dancing and singing go on until late [584] afternoon. This provides an occasion for the more enterprising adolescent male to spot a potential bride, about whom he may diffidently ask his father to make inquiries.

*565 796 526 Christmas, celebrated in early January, is marked chiefly by the playing of secular games. The common word for Christmas, *gannā*, is actually the name of an outdoors game played with sticks and a wooden puck. Played by boys, young men, and occasionally elders on the afternoon of Christmas Day, *gannā* is marked by a spirit of aggressive license. Accustomed norms of deference are held in abeyance. The game is played in so rough and disorderly a manner that it often results in broken limbs and scarred faces. Staged by two teams made up on the spot, *gannā* is concluded at dusk by volleys of abusive limericks with which the victors revile their adversaries.[4]

*565 796 This is the season for special festivities on saints' days. St. Gabriel is particularly honored in December, as are St. Mary, St. George, and again St. Michael

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836 183 peers with the insulting term *šīlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 572 [837] The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the husband or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 [585] The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 582 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 [832] [584] This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭimqat, the girl may make some effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in wh[illegible] case he

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may ask around to learn the identity of her father and then present the matter hopefully to his own father.

Despite this possibility of concession to the boy's amorous desires, the interests of the father are decisive in the selection of a marriage mate, and traditionally the boy has not even known what his bride looks like until the wedding itself. The boy who dares to choose a wife on his own commits an offense for which the father has the moral right to curse and disinherit him. Marriage is regarded as a bond between families, not individuals, and the families of prospective brides are carefully inspected before the father agrees to a contract of betrothal. In making his choice, the father looks for a family whose economic level is at least as high as, if not slightly higher, than his own. He makes certain that the family does not have members who are leprous or who practice the manual crafts associated with the evil eye. He sends a messenger to visit the family on some pretext, for the purpose of determining the character of the girl and her parents. If there is any consanguine relation between the two families, he makes sure that the prospective bride and groom are separated by more than seven generations; that is, they must not have a common great-great-grandparent. A further consideration might be whether there has been any strife or rivalry between the two families, in which case the father may want to try to resolve it by means of a "political" marriage.

Once the father has decided upon a suitable mate for his son, with the advice of the mother and perhaps other relatives, he sends one or more intermediaries, usually elders, to speak on his behalf with the girl's father. The interview is conducted with considerable circumlocution, the petitioners veiling their true purpose until late in the conversation and the girl's father displaying reluctance to grant their request. Often no agreement is reached at this meeting, and the petitioning party must wait to ask a second time. If the girl's father is unwilling to give her hand, he will beg off with some polite excuse, such as that the girl is too young or that he has already promised her to someone else. If he is willing, a date for a formal betrothal is set, at which time the boy and his father together with a group of elders and other relatives repair to the home of the girl's father. After the boy gives presents to the girl's parents, the two fathers discuss their respective contributions of land, cattle, and other goods to the prospective household. When these economic arrangements are settled, a contract for marriage is sworn before witnesses and a date for the wedding is agreed upon, leaving ample time for the two families to vie in preparing sumptuous feasts for the occasion. If the girl is quite young, as long as two or three years may elapse between engagement and marriage.

The wedding festivities commence at the home of the girl's father. After

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college, however, has no assets beyond his diploma in most cases. He must wait a number of years to achieve the beginnings of financial stability.

The students' conception of marriage, moreover, reflects a still more profound change. They are no longer content to regard the selection of a mate as a matter to be arranged by parents in accord with their own interests and standards. They reject the old-fashioned Amhara marriage in which romantic love plays no part and divorce is common. Most of them insist on the right to choose their own spouses, and they tend to approach that choice with criteria which differ from those of their parents. Instead of following such traditional criteria as good upbringing, family background, and wealth, a number of modern adolescents aspire to find spouses who, above all else, are educated, who share their opinions and beliefs, and who will be good companions. (See Table 6.) Even such strong aversions as those against tribal and religious exogamy have receded somewhat before the new ideal of marriage founded on romantic love.* The figures in Table 7 are indicative of the diffusion of this ideal as well as of the growth of a sentiment of Ethiopian nationality.

TABLE 6

QUALITIES MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS IN A FUTURE WIFE OR HUSBAND*

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary Schools		College Males
	Males	Females	
Educated	48	75	41
Shares my opinions and beliefs	44	48	43
Religious	34	25	19
Good companion	25	30	45
Beautiful	15	0	22
Kind and generous	15	13	9
Wealthy	4	2	5
Will impress my friends socially	3	2	2
Number	(385)	(39)	(191)

* Related to Gillespie-Allport question No. 17.

* Although Amhara men have customarily had sexual relations with non-Amhara women and produce countless offspring from them, the latter have not been considered appropriate choices for marriage, except in very high strata where the marriage served a purpose primarily political.

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*883 178 581 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love. Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few *883 834 178 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, ingrained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

883 836 178 548 834 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event. Students also frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 178 581 584 [152] The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 178 581 586 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also connected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adolescent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on

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152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

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returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other. The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know potential spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men, and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The traditional mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive